

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

-----018381 272148Z /61

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7601

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 10267

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, SHUM, CI

SUBJECT: LEIGH MOVING AGAINST PINOCHET

1. SUMMARY: AIR FORCE JUNTA MEMBER GENERAL LEIGH IS APPARENTLY PROMOTING SOME KIND OF MOVE AGAINST PINOCHET. LEIGH HAS ATTEMPTED TO INVOLVE THE USG. I STRONGLY RECOMMEND ABSOLUTELY NO U.S. INVOLVEMENT OF ANY KIND. A FULLER DESCRIPTION OF STATE OF PLAY SUBJECT NON-NODIS SEPTEL. END SUMMARY.

2. ON DECEMBER 24 LEIGH CALLED IN AIR ATTACHE AND US AIR FORCE OFFICER CMMANDING MILGP. LEIGH DENOUNCED THE JANUARY 4 PLEBISCITE AS A "SHOW" DESIGNED PRIMARILY TO STRENGTHEN PINOCHET'S POWER AT THE JUNTA'S EXPENSE; STATED THAT THE VOTE WOULD BE MEANINGLESS BECAUSE THE MILITARY WOULD DO THE COUNTING AND BECAUSE ALL BALLOTS NOT MARKED "NO" WOULD BE COUNTED AS "YES"; AND DECLARED THAT PINOCHET WOULD USE THE ENSUING APPARENT DEMONSTRATION OF SUPPORT TO CONSOLIDATE HIS POWER. LEIGH SAID THAT HE AND ADMIRAL MERINO HAD VOTED AGAINST THE PLEBISCITE WITHIN THE JUNTA AND THAT ONLY CARABINERO GENERAL MENDOZA SUPPORTED PINOCHET.

3. LEIGH THEN MADE HIS PITCH: WOULD THE USG LEAK PINOCHET'S  
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REAL INTENTIONS TO THE US PRESS FOR REPLAY THROUGH THE CHILEAN MEDIA TO THE CHILEAN VOTERS? HE ARGUED THAT SUCH ACTION WOULD AVOID FORCING THE AIR FORCE AND NAVY INTO OPEN OPPOSITION, CAUSING A CHAOTIC INTERNAL SITUATION. LEIGH ASKED THE US AIR FORCE OFFICERS FOR CONFIRMATION THAT HIS MESSAGE HAD BEEN DELIVERED TO ME; I INSTRUCTED THE AIR ATTACHE TO SAY ONLY THAT HE HAD DONE SO.

4. COMMENT: LEIGH HAS REPORTEDLY RAISED SIMILAR OBJECTIONS IN A LETTER WHICH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS SOURCES TELL US HAS BEEN SENT TO AT LEAST ONE NEWSPAPER, ONE MAGAZINE AND TO SUPREME COURT PRESIDENT EYZAGUIRRE. GIVEN THE APPARENH DISTRIBUTION OF THE LEIGH LETTER, HE CLEARLY DOES NOT NEED OUR ASSISTANCE TO GET HIS DISSENTING VIEWS IN THE PUBLIC ARENA. USG SHOULD RIGOROUSLY AVOID ANY PUBLIC IMPLICATION IN LEIGH'S PUBLICITY SCHEME. WHETHER LEIGH IS ATTEMPTING AN ANTI-PINOCHEP POWER PLAY OR SIMPLY TRYING TO PRESENT HIMSELF TO US IN THE MOST FAVORABLE POSSIBLE LIGHT AS A FUTURE ALTERNATIVE TO PINOCHEP, NOTHING WOULD STRENGTHEN PINOCHEP'S HAND IN THE JANUARY 4 VOTE MORE THAN EVIDENCE THAT THE USG SHARED AND WAS LEAKING THE TYPES OF ASSESSMENTS THAT LEIGH IS ADVANCING. I WISH TO RE-EMPHASIZE OUR RECOMMENDATION (SANTIAGO 10,2210 THAT USG OFFICIALS MAKE ABSOLUTELY NO COMMENT FOR ATTRIUHION#OR OTHERWISE ON THE FORTHCOMING PLEBISCITE.

5. A FINAL NOTE. I AM INTRIGUED BUT NOT REALLY SURPRISED THAT LEIGH STILL FEELS THE NEED TO TOUCH BASE WITH US. THE HABITS OF FMRHY#YEARS OF UNFORTUNATE U.S. INTERVENTION IN CHILE'S INTERNAL POLITICS DIE HARD.  
LANDAU

NOTE BY OC/T: SANTIAGO 10267 #AS RECEIVED, CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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